

**Georgetown University - Spring 2010**  
***Late Renaissance and Early Modern Italy* – Hist. 103-62**

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**Course description**

The course is conceived as an historical and anthropological survey of the main events and issues that characterized Early Modern Italy. This period, which starts with the Black Death (1348) and goes until the Enlightenment (ca. 1700), will be considered as a consistent and unitary section of history in which the merging of classical heritage and religious creed produced many of the elements which shaped European Civilization. Attention will be broadly focused on culture, politics, and religion in order to grasp the elements of specificity of the Old Regime. Special emphasis will be put on the princely court, and on ideas, manners and art forms that were codified by this aristocratic environment, as one of the most relevant contribution of Renaissance and Baroque Italy to Western behavioral and cultural codes. Attention will also be put on the analysis of the lower ranks of Italian society, studying how the lower sectors of the Italian population (servants, prostitutes, and desperately poor) were excluded from political power. In this regard, the course will examine Italian mentality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and how minorities were commonly persecuted in trial in which judges and courts were commonly legitimized by biased political forces.

**Readings\*:**

1. P. JOHNSON, *The Renaissance* (London, 2003), pp. 3-18.
2. P. JONES, 'Communes and Despots in Late-Medieval Italy', in *Major Problems in the History of the Italian Renaissance*, ed by B. G. KOHL – A. A. SMITH (Toronto, 1996), pp. 146-156.
3. P. BURKE, 'Sacred rulers, royal priests: rituals of the early modern popes', in *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy. Essays on perception and communication* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 46-97.
4. M. FANTONI, *The Medici Courts*, in *The Princely Courts of Europe, 1500-1750*, ed by J. ADAMSON (London, 1999), pp. 255-273.
5. A. TENENTI, 'The Merchant and the Banker', in *Renaissance Characters*, ed. by E. GARIN (Chicago-London, 1991), pp. 154-179.
6. S. K. COHN Jr., 'Sex and Violence on the Periphery. The Territorial State in Early Renaissance Florence', in IDEM, *Women in the Streets. Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, 1999), pp. 98-136.
7. N. ZEMON DAVIS, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, 1983).
8. S. K. COHN Jr., 'Nuns and Dowries Funds. Women's Choices in the Renaissance', in IDEM, *Women in the Streets. Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, 1999), pp. 76-97.
9. J. C. BROWN, 'Gender', in *Renaissance Historiography*, ed. by J. Woolfson (New York, 2005), pp. 177-192.
- 10.- C. K. KILLERBY, 'Practical problems in the enforcement of Italian Sumptuary Laws', in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 99-120.
11. A. ZORZI, 'The judicial system in Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth century', *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 40-58.
12. P. BURKE, 'The Courtier', in *Renaissance Characters*, ed. by E. GARIN (Chicago-London, 1991), pp. 98-122.
13. B. CASTIGLIONE, *The Book of the Courtier*, ed. by D. JAVITCH (New York-London, 2002).
14. N. MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince* (Harmondsworth 1963), I Book, pp. VII-63.

15. H. KUNG, 'Reform, Reformation or Counter-Reformation?', in IDEM, *The Catholic Church* (London, 2002), pp. 118-148.
16. P. BURKE, 'Rituals of healing', in *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy. Essays on perception and communication* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 207-220.
17. B. LEVACK, *The Witch*, in *Baroque Personae*, ed. by R. VILLARI (Chicago, 1991), pp. 239-262.
18. E. GARIN, 'The Philosopher and the Magus', in *Renaissance Characters*, ed. by E. GARIN (Chicago-London, 1991), pp. 121-153.

**\* All the readings are online via Blackboard**

**Meeting times:**

Tuesday: 13.45-15.15

Thursday: 13.45-15.15

**Course requirements:**

- Class presentation on the research topic
- Research paper (12 to 15 pages)
- Midterm Exam
- Final Exam

**Class schedule**

**Week I:**

**19 January**

- a. Course introduction
- b. Definition of an historical period: the Renaissance

**21 January**

- a. Humanism and the revival of Antiquity
- b. Renaissance for whom?

**READING 1: JOHNSON, *The Renaissance***

**Week II:**

**26 January**

- a. The peculiarity of the Italian case
- b. Italy in the early Modernity

**READING 2: JONES, 'Communes and Despots in Late Medieval Italy'**

**28 January**

- a. Rome and its re-birth
- b. Jubilees

**READING 3: BURKE, 'Sacred rulers, royal priests'**

**Week III**

**2 February**

Visit to *Palazzo Vecchio*

**READING 5: TENENTI, 'The Merchant and the Banker', in *Renaissance Characters***

**4 February**

- a. Florentine vs. Venice: two republican models
- b. Other Renaissances

**READING 4: FANTONI, *The Medici Courts***

**Week IV:**

**9 February**

- a. Aristocracy, patricians, and workers
- b. Prostitutes and poor

**READING 6: COHN, 'Sex and Violence'**

11 February

*The Return of Martin Guerre*

**READING 17: ZEMON DAVIS, *The Return of Martin Guerre***

**Week V:**

**16 February**

- a. Household, fathers and sons
- b. Daughters and dowries

**READING 8: COHN, 'Nuns and Dowry Funds'**

**18 February**

- a. Women
- b. Children

**READING 9: BROWN, 'Gender'**

Saturday, February 20: Fieldtrip to Lucca

**Week VI:**

**23 February**

REVIEW SESSION

**25 February**

MIDTERM EXAM

Spring Break: 26 February - 07 March

**Week VII:**

**9 March**

- a. Sumptuary laws and sexual control
- b. Crime, insurrection, and disease

**READING 7: KILLERBY, 'Practical problems in the enforcement of Italian Sumptuary Laws'**

**11 March**

- a. Judicial System
- b. The spectacle of suffering

**READING 10: ZORZI, 'The judicial system in Florence'**

**Week VIII:**

**16 March**

- a. Princely courts in Italy
- b. Individual lay patronage

**READING 11: BURKE, 'The Courtier', in *Renaissance Characters***

**18 March**

- a. Baldesar Castiglione
- b. *The Book of the Courtier*

**READING 12: CASTIGLIONE, *The Book of the Courtier*, I Book**

**Week IX:**

**23 March**

- a. Niccolò Machiavelli
- b. *The Prince*

**READING 13: MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince***

**25 March**

*Luther*

**Week X:**

**30 March**

- a. The Protestant Reformation
- b. ... and its cultural impact

**READING 14: KUNG, 'Reform, Reformation or Counter-Reformation?'**

**1 April**

- a. Religious discipline and popular culture
- b. The Catholic Reformation and its social costs

**READING 15: BURKE, 'Rituals of healing'**

**Easter Break: 02-05 April**

**Week XI:**

**6 April**

- a. Witch-Hunt
- b. *Maleficium* and diabolism

**READING 16: LEVACK, *The Witch***

**8 April**

- a. The scientific revolution
- b. Copernicus and Galileo: toward the Enlightenment?

**READING 18: GARIN, 'The Philosopher and the Magus', *Renaissance Characters***

**Week XII:**

**13 April**

- a. Class Presentations
- b. Class Presentations

**15 April**

- a. Class Presentations
- b. Class Presentations

**Week XIII:**

**19-22 April**

FINAL EXAMS AND RESEARCH PAPER DUE